THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) The freedom fighters who apply for grant of pension and fulfil the requirements as laid down under the scheme are sanctioned pension. However, many freedom fighters may not have applied for grant of pension under the scheme.

(b) There is no scheme to identify the freedom fighters and to grant pension. However, in 287 cases Government has granted pension *suo motu*.

Diversion of Funds sanctioned for building Bridges in Tamil Nadu

1136. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India has sanctioned money for the building of two bridges in Tamil Nadu for the benefit to the fishermen;

(b) if so, the date and amount of money sanctioned, whether Government of Tamil Nadu has utilised that money for the purpose for which it was given;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and for which purpose that money was used; and

(d) the action propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Purchase of Tele-communication Equipment at High Prices

1137. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Tele-communication reversed its recommendation on the purchase of certain test equipment in favour of a Hyderabad based firm resulting in an estimated loss to the tune of over Rs. 13 crore recently;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the equipment is being purchased from the firm and its associates at prices substantially higher than the lowest bids; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Department has placed advance purchase orders for 90% of the tendered quantity on the firms who were found to be fully meeting the tender conditions and have offered field proven instruments at the lowest price quoted amongst them. For the balance quantity, Advance Purchase Orders were placed on the new entrants at the lowest price quoted amongst them to encourage indigenous manufacturing.

Infrastructure Development in Paradeep Port Trust

1138. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a prop- osal to take some steps for the development of some major ports;

(b) if so, the details of the develop- mental activities proposed for the year 1996-97;

(c) whether Government proposes to develop infrastructural facilities in Para- deep Port; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The list of important developmental schemes (both sanctioned and to be sanctioned) in respect of various major ports including Paradip Port which are included in Annual Plan 1996-97 is annexed as statement.